

Public Health: Everybody Counts!

Talking Points for Survey, Nov. 13 – Dec. 13, 2003

- There has never been a full census of Washington state's public health workforce.
- In order to speak more effectively about who we are and what we do ... we need to better understand our workforce! This information is important when talking to policy makers and partners in our communities.
- To gather this information, the Public Health Improvement Partnership's (PHIP) Workforce Development Committee will be conducting a full census of the state and local public health governmental workforce in Washington state (as many as 6,000 people) from Nov. 13 – Dec. 13, 2003.
- The survey will give us information to better describe Washington's public health workforce in order to help us plan for succession, prevention of shortages, training, and other changes.
- The online survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.
- This survey is just the first phase of a project to understand the entire public health workforce in Washington. We are beginning with governmental public health workers, but will later expand our work to include other public health partners.
- The local health jurisdiction or Department of Health office with the highest percentage participation will be thanked with a celebratory event after the first of the year.
- The results of Public Health: Everybody Counts! will be used to write a report, available to everyone. This report will be ready in time for Public Health Week during April 2004.

Everybody Counts! FAQs

Who is being counted?

The online survey is designed to include *everyone* who works in a local health jurisdiction or the Washington State Department of Health. Think of this as a census of our public health workforce...Everybody Counts!

Does this really mean everybody in my agency?

Yes. The survey asks about a broad range of job functions, so there will be a way for all employees to describe what they do.

- Administrative support and facilities staff? Yes.
- Human Services staff? EMS? Jail staff? Yes.
- Part time employees? Yes.
- Environmental Health, outside the local health department?

We will work with those counties to try to include as many EH people as possible

The coding about job functions will allow us to sort out responses later so that we can point out where there is variation among jurisdictions because of what services reside in the health department or district – or in another county department.

Who is not being counted?

Contractors to local or state health jurisdictions will not be counted – only employees. Employees of other community agencies will not be counted. We recognize that some of these people carry out major public health roles, but we need to set a limit on who we include for this first effort. In the future, we may find a way to measure the broader community capacity.

What if I do not work on line and cannot get on-line to take the survey?

The survey is designed to be completed on-line. But, if you cannot have online access for this, we still want to hear from you so we provide a convenient alternative. Contact your agency coordinator or Janice Taylor, PHEverybodyCounts@doh.wa.gov, 360-236-4086 to participate.

How long will this take?

Usually 10-20 minutes, based on our pilot tests. Longer for some; shorter for others.

Can I start and stop the survey while taking it?

You can pause while taking the survey, but you cannot save the results and return to it later. If you close the survey before completing it, you'll need to start at the beginning.

What do you want to know?

The survey asks about what type of work you do, how much time you spend on the key areas of your work, about your education and work history, what licenses you hold, how long you have been working, and how long you expect to continue working. The survey is simple and descriptive. It does not ask for opinions or lengthy narratives.

Do I have to give my name?

While you do not have to give your name, the survey asks for it so that we can follow up in case there is technical trouble in transmitting the data and to assure as much as possible that we have no inadvertent duplicates. Names will not be kept and all data will be aggregated.

Who will see the results and when will results be available?

A summary will be shared with all our public health partners as soon as it is available. We expect to make the material available in time for Public Health week, in early April 2004.

How will results be used?

The information provides a basic description of our public health workforce, something we don't have today. The information will be used for identifying shortages that might exist now and in the future. It will help with planning.

Once again, *why* is this important?

This information is important when talking to policy makers and partners in our communities. To speak more effectively about who we are and what we do ... we need to better understand our workforce! For example, it's very difficult to explain that we need more people in a specific discipline or region if we can't say how many people with certain skills or in certain roles we have now. And for effective recruitment and retention, we need to know how long we've been in these roles, and how long we plan to stay.

If we are stumped, who do we call?

Janice Taylor

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360-236-4086